



MERCURY EDUCATION AND REDUCTION ACT

Fact Sheet on Labeling, Recycling and Disposal

In 2003 the Washington State Legislature passed the Mercury Education and Reduction Act (MERA) regulating sale, use and disposal of mercury-containing products in our state. Mercury released from these products builds up in our environment, particularly in fish. Eating fish contaminated with mercury is a serious health issue for woman of childbearing age and young children. This fact sheet provides information regarding the new law and how we can all help to clean-up mercury in Washington State.

Mercury Labeling

As of January 1, 2004, all fluorescent lamps sold or distributed in Washington State must be labeled with the universal mercury symbol, “Hg”. This symbol should alert consumers and businesses that this item must be disposed of properly.

Timeline for Mercury Reduction in Washington State

The MERA lays out the following timeline for implementation:

January 1, 2004	All mercury-containing lamps, including fluorescent lights, and their packaging, manufactured after November 30, 2003 must have an “Hg” label, such as the symbol on this page.
January 1, 2005	Washington State government must begin to purchase products containing little or no mercury.
January 1, 2006	No sale of the following mercury-containing items: <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Thermometers except for calibration;✓ Manometers (blood pressure cuffs);✓ Commercial or residential thermostats unless the manufacturer participates in a recovery/recycling program;✓ Novelties containing mercury; and✓ Newly manufactured cars containing a mercury switch.
January 1, 2006	Novelty manufacturers must notify retailers on proper disposal of mercury-containing items.
January 1, 2006	Primary and secondary schools can no longer purchase, and must remove and properly dispose of, bulk elemental mercury.

Mercury Recycling Vendors in Washington State

All Washington State businesses should recycle their mercury-containing lamps and ensure that these used items ultimately go to a recycling facility. Businesses that are regulated as generators

of dangerous waste are required to properly manage their lamps. Proper management most often means that lamps are recycled under universal waste rules. Some Washington counties allow small quantity generators (SQG) to use city/county hazardous waste facilities for lamp disposal, for a fee. Other counties, such as King, prohibit all businesses from using their county household hazardous waste collection facilities. Here are several Pacific Northwest vendors that can be used for recycling of mercury containing products:

EcoLights Northwest 9411 8th Ave S, Seattle, WA 98108 - 206-343-1247
<http://www.ecolights.com/>

Emerald Services 9010 E. Marginal Way S, Seattle, WA 98108 - 206-832-3000

Grainger 4930 3rd Ave S., Seattle, WA 98134 - 206-767-4500
<http://www.grainger.com/Grainger/wwg/start.shtml>

Earth Protection Services, Inc. (EPSI) 7272 SW Durham Rd., # 100, Tigard, OR 97224
1-800-414-0443, <http://www.earthpro.com>

For a more extensive list of vendors, visit Ecology's Hazardous Waste Service Providers Website at <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/apps/hwtr/hwsd/default.htm>.

Why Use Fluorescent Lights?

If fluorescent lights contain mercury, why should we continue to use them? Fluorescent lamps emit more light (lumens), last longer, and cost less than incandescent lights, using 50% less electricity. While they are more expensive to purchase, you save on average \$50 per compact fluorescent bulb over the lifetime use of that bulb because of their long life. By using less electricity, we reduce emissions from the coal-burning power plants that emit mercury.

Further Information

You can find further information about the Mercury Education and Reduction Act of 2003 at the Washington State Department of Ecology website: <http://www.mercurymess.org> along with other useful links that provide information on Hg:

- ✓ EPA's Universal Waste Rule -
<http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/hazwaste/id/univwast.htm>
- ✓ Washington's Mercury Chemical Action Plan -
<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/eap/pbt/hginenv.html>
- ✓ City/County Recycling -
<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/contact/recyclelinks.html>
- ✓ The health impacts of mercury – <http://www.doh.wa.gov/fish/>
- ✓ Fish consumption advisories -
http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/oehas/EHA_fish_adv.htm
- ✓ Dental amalgams -
http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/oehas/amalgam_dental_fillings_12-2003.htm

To learn about recycling options in your area: Call 1-800-RECYCLE

Recycling in King County: Visit <http://www.govlink.org/hazwaste/>

Hazardous waste service providers: Visit
<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/apps/hwtr/hwsd/default.htm>

Who to call

Mercury Education: Madeline Beery, Washington State Department of Health, 1-877-485-7316

Consumer Hazardous Waste: Dave Nightingale, Washington State Department of Ecology 1-360-407-6392

Regulations and Recycling: Mike Gallagher, Washington State Department of Ecology 1-360-407-6868

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